

# The critical list

The best of what's on this week

## Film

Cosmo Landesman, Edward Porter and Peter Whittle



### FILM PICK

#### MEGAMIND

A DreamWorks 3D animated comedy about the super-evil Megamind (voiced by Will Ferrell), out to destroy superhero Metro Man (Brad Pitt) and get Roxy (Tina Fey), the girl of his dreams. The film may lack originality, but it's highly entertaining and the most visually stunning work of 3D animation to appear yet. **CL**  
*PG, 96 mins*

#### MONSTERS

Not another alien-invasion film full of special effects and splatter, but a gripping and impressive character-driven road movie, with a romance between a cynical photographer, Andrew (Scoot McNairy), and a rich girl, Samantha (Whitney Able), as they set out to make it through an "infected area" full of aliens. **CL**  
*12A, 94 mins*

#### ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE

This excellent, heartfelt and long-overdue documentary attempts to get to the bottom of Pol Pot's genocidal regime in Cambodia in the 1970s. **PW**  
*No cert, 93 mins*

#### OF GODS AND MEN

Based on true events, this is a credible and touching account of a group of monks endangered by the civil war in Algeria. Although it's chiefly a study of faith, this is also a tale of earthly comradeship. **EP**  
*15, 121 mins*

#### THE SOCIAL NETWORK

David Fincher and Aaron Sorkin's smart, thrilling film about the founding of Facebook by Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) is an epic about an antihero geek. **CL**  
*12A, 120 mins*

## Theatre

Christopher Hart, Patricia Nicol, Tim Nagle and Maxie Szalwinska

#### BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Katie Mitchell's production of the classic fairy tale delights, startles and gets everyone in the audience – including the grown-ups – watching with large, wondering eyes. **MS**  
*Cottesloe, National, SE1, until Jan 4*

#### JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Clive Rowe's exuberant Dame Daisy Trott leads the high jinks and hits all the right notes in Susie McKenna's storming panto. **PN**  
*Hackney Empire, E8, until Jan 9*

#### DICK WHITTINGTON

What panto is all about – an enthusiastic cast giving it their X Factor all, lame puns, Boris gags, parodies of Glee and The Apprentice, Alicia Keys and Jay-Z numbers, a vulgar dame and a hissable villain. **TN**  
*Lyric Hammersmith, W6, until Jan 8*



### THEATRE PICK

#### KING LEAR

Directed by Michael Grandage, this heavily cut, smaller-scale Lear works as a stark domestic tragedy, with a deeply moving performance by Derek Jacobi in the lead role. **CH**  
*Donmar Warehouse, WC2, until Feb 5*

## Art

Frank Whitford



**ART PICK**

■ **THE YOUNG VERMEER**

Only 36 Vermeers are known to be definitely by him. The few early paintings look like the work of a quite different artist — hence the ease with which Han van Meegeren forged the work of that period. So this is a welcome exhibition, uniting three early compositions, two of them loans, for the first time.  
*National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, until Mar 13*

■ **THE ILLUSTRATORS**

An exhibition covering the history of British illustration that shows how distinguished our contribution to the genre was — and continues to be. Arthur Rackham, Beatrix Potter, Heath Robinson and Ronald Searle are all here. Even the catalogue would make a good present.  
*Chris Beetles Gallery, SW1, until Jan 8*

■ **NORMAN ROCKWELL'S AMERICA**

Sentimentalised kitsch or witty realism? Rockwell's illustrations of daily life in America are technically dazzling and cleverly put together. Some people think they are also considerable art.  
*Dulwich Picture Gallery, SE21, until Mar 27*

■ **LEN LYE: THE BODY ELECTRIC**

A brilliant New Zealand-born artist, Lye (1901-80) came here in his twenties and was a painter, film-maker, photographer and printmaker. This first UK survey should put him back on the map.  
*Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, until Feb 13*

■ **EPIC OF THE PERSIAN KINGS**

Gloriously illustrated manuscripts and miniatures from the Persia of the 14th to 19th centuries, all related to the 1,000-year-old Book of Kings, or Shahnameh.  
*Fitzwilliam, Cambridge, until Jan 9*

■ **GAUGUIN: MAKER OF MYTH**

The first Gauguin exhibition in Britain for more than half a century was worth waiting for. The paintings, prints, ceramics and carvings are superb.  
*Tate Modern, SE1, until Jan 16*

■ **THOMAS LAWRENCE: REGENCY POWER AND BRILLIANCE**

Lawrence was the finest society portrait painter of his generation. More than 50 works demonstrate his ability to capture a likeness.  
*National Portrait Gallery, WC2, until Jan 23*

**Comedy**

Stephen Armstrong

**COMEDY PICK**

■ **FRISKY & MANNISH'S CHRISTMAS MESS... AGE**

The sly pop-pastiche double act host an orgy of comedy, mime, circus and burlesque. As camp as Christmas.  
*Lyric Theatre, W1, Mon*



■ **JIM JEFFERIES**

His blend of shock and awww, from misogyny to heartwarming and back, has a certain adult panto element. In fine form — Christmas Eve eve should be fruity.  
*Leicester Square Theatre, WC2, tonight-Thu*

■ **MICHAEL SMILEY**

The maturing Smiley blends storytelling, gag, heart and bawdy

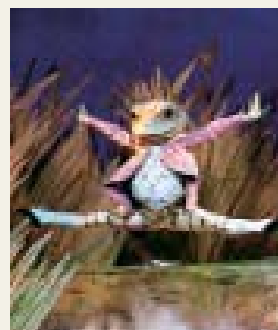
humour. Sean Meo and Smug Roberts provide excellent support.  
*Highlight, Birmingham, Tue-Thu*

■ **ADAM BLOOM, HAL CRUTTENDEN AND JASON JOHN WHITEHEAD**

Bloom heads a strong bill of imaginative comedy with his neat one-liners and well-crafted riffs.  
*Comedy Store, Manchester, Mon-Thu*

**Dance**

David Dougill



**DANCE PICK**

■ **ROYAL BALLET: ASHTON DOUBLE BILL**

In this seasonal family treat, Frederick Ashton's "skating" ballet, *Les Patineurs*, is a vintage charmer, while his witty *Tales of Beatrix Potter*, with wonderfully evocative costumes, brings the characters to life.  
*ROH, WC2, Mon, Wed-Fri*

■ **CINDERELLA**

Prokofiev's fairy-tale ballet in many guises: Ashton's Royal Ballet one; Matthew Bourne's Blitz take for *New Adventures*; and Ashley Page's colourful Scottish Ballet version. (See review, page 26.)  
*RB, ROH, WC2, Tue; MB, Sadler's Wells, EC1, today, Tue-Fri; SB, Theatre Royal, Glasgow, Tue-Fri*

■ **THE SNOWMAN**



The 13th London season for this enchanting dance show, based on Raymond Briggs's children's book, with Howard Blake's music, including Walking in the Air (for the flying sequence).  
*Peacock Theatre, WC2, today, Tue-Fri*

Pop

Mark Edwards

■ KATE RUSBY

The peerless folk singer brings her Christmas tour — playing the distinctive South Yorkshire carols — to a close.  
*Playhouse, Nottingham, tonight*

■ JAMES YORKSTON

The Fence Collective luminary's Christmas show is always a seasonal highlight.  
*Luminaire, NW6, Mon*

■ KINGS OF LEON

Here's a novelty. Not a Christmas tour, just a regular band playing regular shows right up to the hols. When do the Followill boys do their Christmas shopping?  
*Motorpoint Arena, Sheffield, tonight; O2, SE10, Tue*

POP PICK

■ THE POGUES

This could be the last time. It's become a holiday fixture, but the Irish band are billing this as their Farewell Christmas Tour.  
*Brixton Academy, SW9, Mon-Wed*



Classical

Hugh Canning and Paul Driver

■ THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO

Outside London, only Opera North has a Christmas show: Jonathan Dove's dark and un-Disneyesque take on the nasally challenged wooden boy. Martin Duncan's brilliant, eerie staging stars Victoria Simmonds and Jonathan Summers. David Parry returns to conduct. **HC**  
*Grand Theatre, Leeds, Thu*

■ THE MERRY WIDOW

Giles Havergal's stylish direction and Leslie Travers's fabulous costumes bring welcome glamour to Lehar's immortal, but difficult, operetta. Stephanie Corley and William Dazeley star; Wyn Davies conducts. A joyous show. **HC**  
*Opera North, Grand Theatre, Leeds, today, Tue, Wed*

■ MADAM BUTTERFLY

After the success of their La Bohème, performed at a Kilburn pub, OperaUpClose present Puccini with a gayish twist: the heroine is a Bangkok ladyboy, while Lieutenant Pinkerton is an airline pilot. **HC**  
*King's Head, N1, today, Wed-Fri*

■ FRANCESCO PIEMONTESE

The young Swiss pianist's lunchtime recital comprises Janacek's Sonata I.X.1905 (From the Street), Beethoven's Sonata in A, Op 101, and arrangements of parts of Stravinsky's ballet The Firebird. **PD**  
*Wigmore Hall, W1, Mon*

■ LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

John Eliot Gardiner conducts Weber's Der Freischütz overture, Beethoven's Violin Concerto (soloist, Viktoria Mullova) and Mendelssohn's Symphony No 4 (Italian). **PD**  
*Barbican, EC2, Tue*

■ RACHEL PODGER

The brilliant baroque violinist directs her ensemble Brecon Baroque, making its London debut, in concertos by Bach and Telemann. **PD**  
*Wigmore Hall, W1, Wed*

CLASSICAL PICK

■ HANSEL AND GRETEL

The Royal Opera's Christmas show — in German again, although the singers are mostly Anglophones — with Christine Rice, Ailish Tynan, Thomas Allen, Yvonne Howard and Jane Henschel. Rory Macdonald conducts the Patrice Caurier/Moshe Leiser staging. **HC**  
*ROH, WC2, Thu*

